

State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development - Division of Vocational Rehab State Plan for Fiscal Year 2015 (submitted FY 2014)

Notice is hereby given that the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), pursuant to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, announces a period of public comment on its proposed Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2015 Combined Agency State Plan Attachments. The FFY2015 begins on October 1, 2014 and ends on September 30, 2015.

The purpose of this period of comment is to provide individuals, advocates, and other interested parties and/or organizations opportunities to present their views and recommendations regarding Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services for persons with disabilities. In Alaska, these services are provided by DVR through a network of 10 local offices.

DVR is required, under law, to develop and implement a Combined Agency State Plan, which must be reviewed and, as necessary, revised annually when there are changes to its VR program. These revisions take the form of updates to existing attachments. The Plan currently in effect is for FFY2014 and is a compliance document now on file with the Commissioner, Rehabilitation Services Administration and United States Department of Education. It is the blueprint for the provision of VR services to persons with disabilities living in the State of Alaska.

This period of public comment allows interested parties an opportunity to provide input regarding Alaska's public VR program. Comment is being solicited regarding the State Plan attachments included below.

DVR is taking comments on their FY2015 State Plan until Friday, June 6, 2014.

Comments may be submitted:

- Via e-mail to Teresa.Pitt@alaska.gov**
- By fax to Teresa Pitt at 907-269-3632**
- By correspondence to Teresa Pitt, DVR Administrative Office, 619 Ship Creek Avenue, Suite 331, Anchorage AK 99501-1677or**
- By telephone on June 4, 2014 from 3:00 to 4:00 pm by calling toll free 1-888-354-0094; ID 2179208#**

DVR will submit the plan to RSA by June 30, 2014.

Attachment 4.2(c) Input of State Rehabilitation Council

Required annually by all agencies except those agencies that are independent consumer-controlled commissions.

Identify the Input provided by the state rehabilitation council, including recommendations from the council's annual report, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other council reports. Be sure to also include:

- the Designated state unit's response to the input and recommendations; and
- explanations for the designated state unit's rejection of any input or recommendation of the council.

The State of Alaska has a State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) consistent with Section 105 the Act and 34 CFR 361.17. In Alaska, the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee (SVRC) serves as the SRC. The SVRC meets quarterly at various locations throughout the State thus enabling them to gain a comprehensive, first hand understanding of the statewide vocational rehabilitation program. One meeting is held in a very rural/remote community in order for the members to experience the socio economic environment and cultural influences, identify partnership opportunities, and to speak with some of the individuals with disabilities who reside there. Knowledge gained through these experiences assists DVR to continuously improve its service delivery.

Recommendations made to DVR:

The SVRC made no formal, written recommendations to DVR during FY2013. Through discussion and questioning of DVR practices and programmatic results, the SVRC provides on-going support to DVR and offers suggestions that do not always rise to the level of a formal recommendation.

Consumer Satisfaction Survey:

In accordance with 34 CFR § 361.17 (h) (4), the SVRC in collaboration with DVR conducts an on-going Consumer Satisfaction Survey in an effort to ensure that DVR is meeting its programmatic responsibilities to the individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation (VR) services while providing the highest level of service possible. The survey contains a series of statements designed to measure the individual's attitudes and satisfaction levels.

A survey was either mailed or emailed to all those individuals whose cases were closed during federal FY2013 after having received VR services under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE). The information gathered from this process was used in the comprehensive statewide

needs assessment (CSNA), DVR's strategic plan and DVR's state plan. 922 individuals were surveyed with a response rate of 18.9%.

The survey looks at four broad areas:

Program Satisfaction: How did DVR do in general?

- 80% of all respondents expressed overall satisfaction with DVR's services.
- 86% said they would refer a friend or relative to DVR.

Program Information: Was the individual provided adequate information about the VR program?

- 95% responded they knew the purpose of DVR was to help them find a job.

Participant Involvement: Was the individual involved in selecting both VR services and the vocational goal?

- 90% indicated they helped choose their vocational goal.
- 88% indicated they helped plan the VR services they received.

Participant and Staff Interaction: How well did the DVR staff interact with the individual?

- 91% reported they were treated with courtesy and respect.
- 89% said DVR staff were available when needed.

Activities of the SVRC

Throughout the past fiscal year, the SVRC has:

- Collaborated with DVR on the development of the State Plan and the State Plan for Assistive Technology.

- Collaborated with DVR on the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) which included surveying the satisfaction of all individuals who had an open case and providing input on the methodology and results of the CSNA.
- Participated in a strategic planning process to identify goals and priorities for DVR.
- Sponsored an on-going consumer satisfaction survey of individuals who received services under an Individualized Plan for Employment.
- Hosted public forums in both urban and rural areas of the State and garnered consumer satisfaction with DVR services.
- Conducted outreach efforts to recruit new members to the SVRC.
- Educated and provided information on DVR and employment of people with disabilities to the Alaska State Legislature.
- Convened a one-day meeting focusing on Assistive Technology (AT). Participants included AT providers, the AT Committee, individuals who use AT, and others. Toured Assistive Technologies of Alaska (ATLA).
- Toured the Access Alaska Reuse Center and learned about how they are reconditioning and repurposing used assistive technology to for Alaskans.
- Conducted public forums in Juneau and Bethel. The forum in Juneau focused on developing meaningful opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities for employment associated with organized labor and trade associations. The forum in Bethel focused on developing meaningful employment opportunities, including subsistence, for Alaskans with disabilities in rural and remote Alaska.
- Heard from Bethel community members interested in marketing native arts and crafts online.
- Toured Yuut Elitnaurviat (The People's Learning Center) in Bethel.
- Heard presentations from: the State Independent Living Council on its interest to collaborate with the SVRC; DVR's Community Rehabilitation Program specialist on how DVR is working to improve quality assurance of Community Rehabilitation Program services; the DVR chief of services, summarizing DVR's team structure to support specialized populations' service needs; and the new DVR Business Team on how it serves Alaska businesses.

This screen was last updated on Apr 10 2014 12:49PM by Teresa Pitt

Attachment 4.7(b)(3) Request for Waiver of Statewideness

This agency **has not** requested a waiver of statewideness.

This screen was last updated on Apr 10 2012 1:27PM by saakmcintoshj

Attachment 4.8(b)(1) Cooperative Agreements with Agencies Not Carrying Out Activities Under the Statewide Workforce Investment System

Describe interagency cooperation with and utilization of the services and facilities of agencies and programs that are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system with respect to

- Federal, state, and local agencies and programs;
- if applicable, Programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture; and
- if applicable, state use contracting programs.

1. DVR continues to work closely with the Coordinated Resources Project (CRP) or the Anchorage Mental Health Court. The mission of the CRP is to divert people with mental disabilities charged with misdemeanor offenses from incarceration and into community treatment and services including mental health counseling and vocational rehabilitation as appropriate. The hope is to prevent further contacts with the criminal justice system.

2. DVR continues to collaborate with the Alaska Brain Injury Network, the American Indian Vocational Rehabilitation Services (AIVRS) programs, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GC), Access AK and the Veterans Administration to support the University of Alaska Anchorage's Center for Human Development BrainWorks project. BrainWorks is an innovative project that assists individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) to successfully start and maintain a business and is part of a two-year research project funded by the Kessler Foundation. Participants in BrainWorks go through a customized self-employment process and receive assistance with identifying supporters, identifying a business concept, writing a business plan, preparing to launch a business, and maintaining a business. BrainsWorks projects were started in Anchorage, Juneau, and Fairbanks. As of September 30, 2013, four participants have launched their businesses and eight additional participants are preparing to launch with a total of twenty-one participants enrolled in the project. The next step is to formulate a sustainability plan so these services can continue without the financial assistance of this grant which ends December 31, 2013.

3. DVR is a partner of the Alaska Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation Consortium, composed of eleven AIVRS grantees, with a current MOU and Contingency Plan in place. DVR continues to have representation on the Consortia of Administrators for Native American Rehabilitation Executive Board, where the DVR Chief of Services serves as the Membership Chair.

4. DVR actively participates and has a cooperative agreement with the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative which is made up of a consortium of agencies committed to working together to improve employment outcomes for youth and young adults with developmental disabilities, including intellectual disabilities (ID).

5. DVR works with Access Alaska, Anchorage to coordinate case management services for individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury.
6. DVR maintains working partnerships with a variety of community providers and partner agencies throughout Alaska such as the Division of Behavioral Health and the Division of Developmental Disabilities to enhance the coordination, number of referrals and quality of services provided to individuals receiving supported employment services, adult basic education and independent living.
7. DVR is on the Alaska FASD Steering Committee. This is an interagency group including the Alaska Court System, Alaska Department of Corrections, Division of Juvenile Justice, Division of Public Assistance, Division of Behavioral Health, AIVRS programs, and DVR. The goal of the group is to increase the State's capacity to help individuals with FASD to become successfully independent.
8. DVR participates directly on the offender re-entry initiatives occurring in Juneau, Anchorage and MatSu as well as a statewide re-entry committee. These efforts are intended to improve the transition of our inmate population going back into society especially as it relates to successfully finding and retaining good employment.
9. DVR continues to work with the Department of Administration, Division of Personnel and the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education and the State of Alaska as a Model Employer for Individuals with Disabilities. This work included completing an extensive survey of state employees to create a baseline of how many individuals working for the state self-disclosed they have a disability, as defined currently by ADA, and some indicators on how the State of Alaska is making reasonable accommodations for those employees. In addition, considerable progress has been made in expanding and improving DVR's Provisional Hire program under the State of Alaska as part of this effort.
10. DVR continues to have an Interagency Agreement in place with the Department of Veterans Affairs VR&E to cooperate, coordinate and collaborate to create a powerful force within the rehabilitation community to increase vocational opportunities for Veterans of the military service in the United States, regardless of the level of disability by including DVR as a partner in a comprehensive system of case management. DVR's Chief of Services attends monthly meetings with VR&E to strengthen collaboration and coordination of services.

This screen was last updated on Apr 11 2014 8:10PM by Teresa Pitt

Attachment 4.8(b)(2) Coordination with Education Officials

- Describe the designated state unit's plans, policies, and procedures for coordination with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services, including provisions for the development and approval of an individualized plan for employment before each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services leaves the school setting or, if the designated state unit is operating on an order of selection, before each eligible student able to be served under the order leaves the school setting.
- Provide information on the formal interagency agreement with the state educational agency with respect to
 - consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including VR services;
 - transition planning by personnel of the designated state agency and educational agency that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs;
 - roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining state lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services;
 - procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

DVR's policy on *Transition Services* describes the VR counselor's role and responsibilities in planning for and developing an IPE for each eligible student prior to the student's leaving school. DVR's Transition Coordinator further provided training to both special education teachers at the State's annual Special Education Conference and VR counselors on their respective roles in transition planning. Various DVR staff communicates at multiple levels of special education professionals within the State. For example, the Transition Coordinator and the Assistant Chief of Rehabilitation Services communicate regularly with State Department of Education and Early Development special education staff while the VR counselors' focus in on building relationships with the special education teachers. The SVRC representative on Special Education and transition provides input to DVR's strategic plan and on the long-range transition plan developed by DVR's transition coordinator.

DVR implemented, in coordination with the Department of Education, the Secondary Transition referral form to provide teachers an efficient way to connect a student with the VR counselor serving their school. Teachers can access the referral form directly through a link on the Department of Education's IEP form.

DVR has cooperative agreements with all levels of educational institutions within the State including local school districts, the State Department of Education and Early Development (DEED), and the University of Alaska statewide system. The purpose of these agreements is to outline the responsibilities of all entities involved with either the transition from high school or the education of those individuals with disabilities.

1. The Department of Education and Early Development, Division of Special Education (DEED) and DVR has an interagency agreement which is designed to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services.

The agreement includes:

- DVR's assurance of the development and implementation of an IPE for each student determined to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services before the student leaves school;
- Designation of a regional DVR contact that is responsible for clarifying questions and concerns relating to the implementation of the agreements with local school districts;
- DVR's assurance that the core tenets, principles, and career goals stated in each student's IEP will be incorporated into the development of their Individualized Plan for Employment. DEED's Special Education Unit also provides funding for members of the State Vocational Rehabilitation Committee to travel to events related to transition student such as the annual statewide special education conference.

2. DVR has memorandums of understanding or cooperative agreements with all of Alaska's fifty-four school districts. The purpose of the agreements is to provide comprehensive, coordinated services to meet the special educational transitioning needs of students age 16 to 22. Through interagency planning the intention is to eliminate duplication of services, promote the most efficient use of resources, clarify agency roles and responsibilities, and offer quality transitioning plans thereby assuring continuous, well-coordinated services for young adults and their families. The agreements are managed through the office of DVR's transition coordinator.

The agreements address:

- Referrals to DVR;
- The assessment responsibilities of the schools and DVR;
- The programmatic responsibilities each party has, such as the school's role in educating the students with disabilities through the age of twenty-one and DVR's role in providing technical assistance to the schools for IEP development and when appropriate, vocational support; and
- The financial responsibilities of the schools and DVR.

DVR also has a Memorandum of Understanding between the Mat-Su Borough School District and the Mat-Su Service for Children and Adults to support the successful transition of the school district's Next Step program from high school to paid meaningful employment. Desired student post school outcomes are to be attained through a sustainable, well planned and coordinated effort by the three entities. A guiding principle of the agreement is that it is not the responsibility of the student to fit into what services are available, rather it is the responsibility of the service agencies and providers to offer the services that fit the needs of the student.

3. DVR has a memorandum of understanding with the University of Alaska statewide system delineating the responsibilities of each entity regarding individuals with disabilities who are served by DVR and who are enrolled as students within the University of Alaska statewide system.

The agreement includes:

- The roles of each party;
- The financial and programmatic responsibilities;
- The legal basis for the agreement; and
- The method for resolving disputes.

4. DVR works closely with three local school districts, hospitals and CRPs to implement the national Project Search model in Anchorage, MatSu and Fairbanks. This has resulted in developing a collaborative internship model where youth with developmental or intellectual disabilities are provided opportunity to learn real job skills in intership positions set up throughout the three hospitals involved. The goal being obtaining integrated employment using the skills learned through the internships.

5. DVR supports and participates in the Tapestry Postsecondary Transition Program through the University of Alaska Center for Human Development. The purpose of the program is to provide students (ages 18 to 21) with intellectual and cognitive disabilities a postsecondary college experience to develop self-advocacy skills, engage in career exploration and develop social skills that lead to employment in a career field or enrollment in a postsecondary educational program.

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Attachment 4.8(b)(3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Nonprofit Organizations

Describe the manner in which the designated state agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers.

DVR has signed agreements with community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) to provide specific vocational rehabilitation services. Only CRPs who meet the qualifications described in the DVR Standards for Community Rehabilitation Programs and have a signed agreement with DVR are eligible to provide such services. The agreements are renewed every three (3) years. The agreement has recently been revised to include minimum training, education and experience requirements for the different services DVR purchases from CRPs. New policies regarding payment structures are in draft format and a strong CRP component has been incorporated into the annual case review process.

The service provider application:

- Requires a background check as well as the education and employment experience of all employees working with DVR consumers.
- Fees for services.
- Outlines the conditions and guidelines under which the division and the service provider will provide services for individuals with disabilities specifying the responsibilities of each party, the scope of services, the evaluation criteria, and reporting and billing requirements.
- Outlines standards for service providers including: organizational structure; personnel; fiscal management; health, safety, and accessibility; and indemnity and insurance requirements.

DVR's CRP specialist is responsible for approving the agreements. Changes in key personnel and fees are reported to and negotiated with DVR. Following the principles of informed choice, information on the CRPs including their services and fees are available to DVR's consumers and are posted on DVR's internet.

This screen was last updated on Jun 24 2013 2:31PM by Teresa Pitt

Attachment 4.8(b)(4) Arrangements and Cooperative Agreements for the Provision of Supported Employment Services

Describe the efforts of the designated state agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other state agencies and other appropriate entities in order to provide the following services to individuals with the most significant disabilities:

- supported employment services; and
- extended services.

Collaborative efforts exist between DVR, the Division of Behavioral Health, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, the University of Alaska Affiliated program (the Center for Human Development), and the Division of Senior and Disability Services (DSDS) to provide extended services to those supported employment consumers leaving the VR program.

The Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education functions as the State Council on Developmental Disabilities and works to build capacity, plans for systems change, and advocates for change for people with disabilities. System change focuses on system changes include housing, employment, early intervention, special education, lifelong learning, independent living and inclusion in the community. DVR's Assistant Chief of Rehabilitation Services is an active member of this council. DSDS maintains the developmentally disabled register which is in essence the wait list for long term support services. DVR is in the process of renewing a memorandum of understanding with DSDS.

The Mental Health Board and the Governor's Advisory Board on Alcohol and Drug Abuse have combined to plan and advocate for policies, programs and services that help Alaskans who have a mental illness or substance abuse issues. DVR's Assistant Chief of Rehabilitation Services is an active member of this board. In addition, DVR has an on-going commitment to quality supported employment services as evidenced by the recent formation and active participation in several cross-agency supported employment related initiatives such as the Alaska Integrated Employment Initiative. DVR has sustained the principles of the system change customized employment grant that focused on wrap-around services for the most severely disabled.

As mentioned in Attachment 4.8(b)(1), DVR is working with different organizations focusing on two groups which often require Supported Employment Services: those individuals with TBI and those diagnosed as FASD. The TBI service delivery system is focused on the BrainWorks project with a goal of self-employment. The FASD Steering Committee recognizes the long term affects FASD has on those affected and the increasing need of long-term supports..

This screen was last updated on Apr 11 2014 8:41PM by Teresa Pitt

Attachment 4.10 Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Data System on Personnel and Personnel Development

1. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on qualified personnel needs with respect to:

- the number of personnel who are employed by the state agency in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services in relation to the number of individuals served, broken down by personnel category;
- the number of personnel currently needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services, broken down by personnel category; and
- projections of the number of personnel, broken down by personnel category, who will be needed by the state agency to provide vocational rehabilitation services in the state in 5 years based on projections of the number of individuals to be served, including individuals with significant disabilities, the number of personnel expected to retire or leave the field, and other relevant factors.

In FFY 2013, Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) served a total of 3630 individuals with disabilities, utilizing the staff of 98 full time vocational rehabilitation (VR) professionals. These consist of:

- 1 Director
- 1 Chief
- 1 Assistant Chief
- 5 Regional Managers
- 42 VR Counselors
- 28 VR Assistants
- 1 VR Evaluator
- 18 Administrative and Support Staff
- CRP Specialist

DVR finds present staffing levels sufficient to serve all eligible participants. DVR experienced an average rate of turnover during FFY2013.

The State of AK Division of Personnel projects a high rate of staff turnover in the upcoming years, as 18% of DVR employees are currently eligible for retirement and 30% will become eligible within the next five years.

Row	Job Title	Total positions	Current vacancies	Projected vacancies over the next 5 years
1	Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor	42	2	12
2	Vocational Rehabilitation Assistant	28	2	8
3	Vocational Rehabilitation Evaluator	1	0	1
4	Vocational Rehabilitation Manager	5	0	2
5	Other Management Staff	20	0	5
6	ASL Interpreter	1	0	0
7		0	0	0
8		0	0	0

9		0	0	0
10		0	0	0

2. Describe the development and maintenance of a system for collecting and analyzing on an annual basis data on personnel development with respect to:

- a list of the institutions of higher education in the state that are preparing vocational rehabilitation professionals, by type of program;
- the number of students enrolled at each of those institutions, broken down by type of program; and
- the number of students who graduated during the prior year from each of those institutions with certification or licensure, or with the credentials for certification or licensure, broken down by the personnel category for which they have received, or have the credentials to receive, certification or licensure.

Educational institutions within the state of Alaska currently lack Bachelor and Master level programs in Rehabilitation Counseling. University of Alaska offers academic programs in related disciplines, such as Associate and Bachelor degrees in Human Services and Psychology, as well as Master of Education degree in Counseling. DVR diligently ensures that all employees are fully qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services; those that do not meet CSPD conditions at the time of hire are mandated to enroll in rehabilitation counseling programs (full length or post-graduate certificates), offered via distance delivery through West Virginia University, San Diego State University and University of Kentucky.

In FFY 2013, 4 VR counselors participated in academic training; one VR counselor completed a graduate program; and one VR counselor successfully passed the CRC exam. DVR currently employs 40 VR Counselors, 90 percent fully meet the CSPD requirements. This represents a 3 percent increase from FFY2012.

Row	Institutions	Students enrolled	Employees sponsored by agency and/or	Graduates sponsored by agency and/or	Graduates from the previous
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			RSA	RSA	year
1		0	0	0	0
2		0	0	0	0
3		0	0	0	0
4		0	0	0	0
5		0	0	0	0

Plan for Recruitment, Preparation and Retention of Qualified Personnel

Describe the development (updated on an annual basis) and implementation of a plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including, the Coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated state unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain personnel who are qualified, including personnel from minority backgrounds and personnel who are individuals with disabilities.

DVR evaluates its personnel needs annually as part of the strategic planning process. The recruitment of qualified rehabilitation personnel has been historically challenging in Alaska due to lack of rehabilitation counseling programs within our university system, as well as Division of Personnel regulations, which mandate several unsuccessful in-state recruitments before out-of-state recruitment becomes an option. To overcome these difficulties, DVR has developed positive relationships with several Rehabilitation Counseling Education (RCE) programs to enable entry and journey level counselors to obtain the necessary qualifications through distance education and intensive on-the-job supervision. This strategy is effective with paraprofessional

staff as well. DVR recruits from various entities, including tribal vocational rehabilitation and human service agencies, and offers paid and non-paid internships to rehabilitation counseling graduate students interested in relocating to Alaska.

In accordance with Title I of the ADA, DVR offers provisional hire to individuals with disabilities to enhance their access to meaningful gainful employment and to ensure community integration. Alaska relies upon educational institutions that deliver curriculum via distance education. Relationships with educational institutions fluctuate based on availability of long-term training grants and staff needs. However, DVR has developed a strong working relationship with West Virginia University (WVU), University of Kentucky and San Diego State University. In order to reach a wider applicant market outside of the traditional in-state recruitment, DVR vacancies are advertised with the University of AK Career Services Center, Rehab Jobs, and Pacific Northwest Center for Continuing Education in Rehabilitation (CCER). Qualified individuals are identified through the ongoing relationship with academic programs throughout the nation.

Personnel Standards

Describe the state agency's policies and procedures for the establishment and maintenance of personnel standards to ensure that designated state unit professional and paraprofessional personnel are adequately trained and prepared, including:

1. standards that are consistent with any national or state-approved or -recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements (including state personnel requirements) that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services; and
2. to the extent that existing standards are not based on the highest requirements in the state applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the state is currently taking and the steps the State Plans to take in accordance with the written plan to retrain or hire personnel within the designated state unit to meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the state, including measures to notify designated state unit personnel, institutions of higher education, and other public agencies of these steps and the timelines for taking each step.

Be sure to include the following:

- specific strategies for retraining, recruiting, and hiring personnel;
- the specific time period by which all state unit personnel will meet the standards;
- procedures for evaluating the designated state unit's progress in hiring or retraining personnel to meet applicable personnel standards within the established time period;
- the identification of initial minimum qualifications that the designated state unit will require of newly hired personnel when the state unit is unable to hire new personnel who meet the established personnel standards;

- the identification of a plan for training newly hired personnel who do not meet the established standards to meet the applicable standards within the time period established for all state unit personnel to meet the established personnel standards.

The state of Alaska does not currently mandate licensure for rehabilitation counselors; as a result, DVR has adopted the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) academic degree requirements as its standard. Strategies that DVR employs to ensure an adequate supply of qualified vocational rehabilitation professionals are:

- Participate in local job/career fairs
- Form an in-house training and staff development team
- Offer paid and non-paid graduate internships
- Support rehabilitation counseling as an employment goal for DVR participants
- Support staff in fulfilling academic requirements to qualify for CRC
- Seek out training to help staff achieve CRC recertification and professional growth
- Utilize training resources and support of TACE and CCER
- Arrange presentations to graduate level counseling students at the local university
- Develop a career advancement system that integrates educational and credentialing required for initial hire and future promotion DVR successfully modified rehabilitation counselor position descriptions to comply with CSPD provisions/mandates.

As a result, those employees that do not meet the qualifying standard must now fulfill all academic requirements necessary to qualify for the CRC examination within six years of hire (for VRC I) or three years (for VRC II). Additionally these employees will receive more intensive supervision and ongoing review of all non-delegable functions (i.e. eligibility determination, plan, plan amendment approval, and closure). As part of DVR strategic planning process, an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of recruitment and training practices is completed; areas of improvement are then identified and incorporated into the plan.

Staff Development

Describe the state agency's policies, procedures, and activities to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated state unit receive appropriate and adequate training in terms of:

1. a system of staff development for professionals and paraprofessionals within the designated state unit, particularly with respect to assessment, vocational counseling, job placement, and rehabilitation technology; and
2. procedures for the acquisition and dissemination to designated state unit professionals and paraprofessionals significant knowledge from research and other sources.

Training and development is guided by issues identified during needs assessment, and takes into account budget availability, new federal initiatives, and outcome of program evaluation. Needs assessment involves individual/regional case reviews, client satisfaction surveys, consumer

forums, performance appraisals, performance skill rating tools, employee development plans, Client Assistant Program annual reports, and supervisor/employee training needs surveys.

During FY2013, DVR staff participated in several conferences, including:

- National symposium for individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing
- Annual school on addictions & behavioral health
- National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute
- Statewide Special Education Conference
- Annual in-service training focused on serving offenders
- Elders in Training
- Serving offenders with cognitive impairments
- Full lives in rural Alaska

Other major training activities consisted of:

- Ethics for rehabilitation professionals
- Emerging Leaders Training
- First lessons in supervision
- Non-violent crisis intervention
- Assessment tools
- Disability Summit

Throughout the year, DVR staff participated in eighteen different continuing education, web-based brief workshops, including:

- Medical Aspects of Disability
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Apples versus Androids
- Aging and Disability
- Medicaid Waiver

All new VR assistant staff participates in on-line training within their first year of employment, learning about:

- History of VR
- Basic Ethical Considerations
- Navigating Sticky Situations
- Developing Collaborative Relationships
- Cultural Diversity

Training activities occur on a continuous basis and many are delivered via teleconference through CCER. Virginia Commonwealth's Rehabilitation Research & Training Center publishes an electronic newsletter, which provides updates regarding relevant research efforts and is disseminated to all DVR personnel. VR counselors utilize the services of medical/psychiatric consultants to regularly update their disability-related knowledge. Evidence-based best practices

and advances in the field, presented by the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI), National Rehabilitation Association, and the National Rehabilitation Counseling Association, are regularly distributed to the field staff. DVR leadership team receives regular updates from the RSA, and maintains active communication with CCER and Pacific Northwest TACE in order to keep pace with the changes in the field of vocational rehabilitation.

Personnel to Address Individual Communication Needs

Describe how the designated state unit has personnel or obtains the services of other individuals who are able to communicate in the native language of applicants or eligible individuals who have limited English speaking ability or in appropriate modes of communication with applicants or eligible individuals.

DVR employs a full-time staff member, who is fluent in American Sign Language (ASL), to facilitate communication with the hard of hearing and deaf consumers/staff. The agency supports employees that are interested in becoming proficient in ASL to increase communication with hard of hearing and deaf participants. Tele-interpreting is widely used. VR counselors that serve this population are allowed to use the text message function as a form of accommodating their consumer's needs. For individuals with limited English proficiency, DVR maintains a roster of employees fluent in various languages; staff may utilize the services of a professional interpreter when needed. DVR relies heavily on tribal vocational rehabilitation programs to educate state staff regarding culturally appropriate methods of communication with Alaska Native participants.

Coordination of Personnel Development Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act

Describe the procedures and activities to coordinate the designated state unit's comprehensive system of personnel development with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act.

DVR consistently collaborates with the State of Alaska Department of Education on numerous staff development and training initiatives.

1. DVR Transition Services. DVR reaches out to students with disabilities throughout Alaska in order to foster their smooth transition from secondary school into vocational/academic training and into the world of work. VR counselors within each regional office are assigned to specific schools to streamline the referral process, ensure counselor participation in IEP development, and ascertain that all schools are informed of DVR services. Contact with schools is carried out at a minimum on a monthly basis. Rural and village schools communicate with DVR through their special education staff, as well as DVR staff that is assigned and travels to that particular rural region. The transition coordinator holds monthly teleconferences with all VR counselors

involved in transition initiatives. These monthly teleconferences allow staff to share information, brainstorm ideas, and develop effective strategies for service delivery. Tapestry which is administered through the University of Alaska's Center for Human Development (CHD), caters to young adults with intellectual disabilities with the goal of teaching them appropriate personal, social, and vocational skills in foster a successful transition to employment. DVR actively collaborates with CHD and other community agencies to ensure that these young individuals with disabilities access the full array of vocational rehabilitation services.

2. Statewide Special Education Conference. DVR strongly encourages counselor presence and participation in this annual conference to establish/maintain an ongoing dialogue with school districts and stay abreast of new developments in the field of special education (i.e. disability issues, assistive technology, classroom accommodations, new legislation, IDEA requirements, etc.). Five DVR staff attended this conference in FFY2013.

3. Special Education Director Conference. The DVR transition coordinator participates in this conference annually. The transition coordinator is a regular presenter at the conference and maintains a vendor booth, which offers special education professionals from the 53 school districts within Alaska a chance to learn about DVR services.

4. DVR's transition coordinator is a member of the following youth boards: Center for Human Development (Tapestry Project) Governor's Council on Disability & Special Education and the Integrated Education Initiative.

This screen was last updated on Apr 28 2014 5:32PM by Teresa Pitt

Attachment 4.11(a) Statewide Assessment

Provide an assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the state, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

- individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;
- individuals with disabilities who are minorities;
- individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program; and
- individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system.

Identify the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the state.

The Alaska Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), as part of the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, is responsible for the administration and operation of Alaska's public vocational rehabilitation program. While DVR continually assesses its performance and the needs of Alaskans with disabilities, the Rehabilitation Act, as amended, Public Law 99-506, Section 101(a) requires each state vocational rehabilitation agency to conduct a comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA) jointly with the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) triennially. The results of the CSNA are used to develop goals, priorities, strategies and actions for both DVR's Strategic and State Plans.

Multiple data sources were used to inform the CSNA, including surveys; a review of local and statewide studies focusing on services and barriers to employment for individuals with disabilities; U.S. Census Bureau data; and the DVR management information system. The data collection and analysis portion of the CSNA focused on disability types, barriers to employment, rural Alaska, transition age youth, minorities, employers, gender, age, Job Centers as part of the workforce investment system and community rehabilitation programs.

1. What are the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment (SE) services?

Summary/Discussion of Data Findings

DVR was able to provide the full range of VR services to all eligible individuals including those experiencing the most significant disabilities as DVR was not on an order of selection at any time during the CSNA study timeframe.

Ninety-four percent of the FFY2011 DVR participants were identified as having either a most significant disability (MSD) or a significant disability (SD). Also, 91 percent or 570 of those individuals exiting the VR program were MSD or SD and were employed earned greater than or equal to the minimum wage. This far exceeds the federal standard of 62.4 percent.

Individuals with cognitive and behavioral health disabilities were the most frequently disability groups identified as MSD at 55 percent and 36 percent respectively. Behavioral health and cognitive related disabilities were also the most frequently identified disabilities for youth.

Thirty-two percent (32%) of the individuals who have been sent a Ticket to Work certificate by Social Security have a behavioral health disability and 10 percent have a developmental disability.

At the end of June 2011, 420 individuals between the ages 18-64 were listed on the I/DD registry. Most of these individuals would require long term support services in order to maintain employment. Alaska DVR has adequate SE funds to meet the needs of all individuals who currently qualify for SE services. The demand for SE services could increase as more individuals are moved off the I/DD register.

DVR participants identified the primary barriers to employment as a loss of benefits (Social Security and Medicaid), physical limitations and lack of training, work experience or education (Table 7). While the respondents to the survey were not broken down into groups by severity of disability, the results can be generally applied across all participants. DVR staff and CRP's (Table 8) identified the three primary barriers to employment as housing, behavioral health services and transportation.

DVR is a combined agency with an obligation to provide VR services to all Alaskans with a disability including those who experience blindness or a visual impairment. The vast majority of DVR participants who experience blindness are most significantly disabled. The data suggests DVR is providing VR services to this population adequately.

Needs/Concerns

- Ensure an adequate number of CRPs and/or DVR staff who are trained to provide benefit analysis (BA) in order for SSA beneficiaries to understand the impact of work on their benefits
- Lack of long term supported employment services
- Lack of behavioral health services in communities
- Lack of adequate and affordable transportation service options
- Lack of vocational programs/services in community behavioral health centers
- Ensure on-going support for services to individuals who experience blindness or a visual impairment Recommendations/Strategies
- Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services for individuals who are in need of long term supported employment services
- Support efforts to establish vocational services from community behavioral health providers

- Represent the needs of individuals with disabilities to increase/improve housing and transportation services, such as serving on the statewide Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board
- Ensure benefits analysis is available • Continue to support the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired and other efforts within DVR to ensure our obligation as a combined agency are met.
- Partner with the Division of Senior and Disability Services to improve the employment opportunities for youth with an intellectual disability and individuals with a traumatic brain injury

2. What are the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities who are minorities or who are in unserved or underserved populations?

The CSNA analyzed data pertaining to individuals with a minority background as well as data by disability type, by age with an emphasis on transition age youth, by geographic areas (rural and non-rural), and by gender to determine if any group is unserved or underserved. In addition, a comparison of individuals exiting the program both employed and not employed after receiving services under an individualized plan for employment (IPE) were compared to determine any bias in the delivery of services.

Summary/Discussion of Data Findings

Individuals with a Minority Background

DVR is not under serving individuals from a minority background. DVR has consistently met the Federal Performance Indicator 2.1 which measures equal access to VR services. The U.S. Census Bureau 2011 American Community Survey estimates one-third of Alaskans who self-identified as having a disability are from a minority background. In FFY2011, approximately one-third of DVR's applicants and those closed from an IPE self-identified as being from a minority background.

The population and DVR numbers by racial/ethnic group are very small for many of the groups, making broad generalizations about service levels inappropriate. Even so, the data suggests that outreach to the Asian population is appropriate.

Rural

Rural Alaska was identified as an underserved area of the state in the previous CSNA. Due to the size of Alaska with much of it inaccessible via roads, rural Alaska encompasses an area larger than many states. DVR defines rural as a community that is not connected by road to a community with a DVR office or is at least 50 miles outside of a community with a DVR office.

Based on this definition and the data analyzed, rural Alaska was once again identified as an underserved area. Rural Alaska presents challenges for all State agencies to serve.

DVR has counseling offices in the more densely populated areas of the State while providing VR services to the remote/rural areas on an itinerant basis. The eleven TVR programs have offices in most of the itinerant locations.

DVR's data shows a seven percent decline in the number of the above defined rural DVR participants from those reported in the 2010 CSNA. For the same period, the Social Security Administration reports a 29 percent decline in Ticket to Work (TTW) certificates issued to rural Alaskans. TTW data is a strong indicator of where Alaskans who experience a disability are living and there appears to be a movement of TTW participants from rural to non-rural communities. This coincides with the data reported by DOLWD's Research and Analysis Section which suggests a migration to the more urban areas of the State due to more employment opportunities and the availability of more services. DVR also acknowledges that the needs of Alaska Natives are closely aligned with the needs of rural residents in general.

Transition Age Youth

Youth transitioning from high school is a priority population as identified in the Rehabilitation Act, Section 7(37).

DVR has increased the actual number of youth served over a five year period by twenty-one percent while youth as a percentage of the entire number of DVR participants has remained constant at about twenty percent. The national average of youth served is thirty-five percent for combined VR agencies. DVR's rehab rate for youth is the second highest in the nation for combined agencies. Therefore, while DVR percentage of youth served is below average, our success rate with youth is very high.

Data is sparse for students with 504 plans. These students quite often have significant health issues, yet do not have IEPs and therefore do not always come in contact with special education staff that is more familiar with the DVR and our services.

Needs/Concerns

- Asian Alaskans appear to be slightly underserved
- Rural Alaskans are underserved with many Alaskan Natives living in rural Alaska
- Transition age youth continue to be a priority population for DVR

Recommendations/Strategies

- *Minority Background*
 - Outreach to the Asian population through the Anchorage Asian Alaskan Cultural center

• *Transition Age Youth*

- Outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities such as the McLaughlin Youth Center
- Expand the DVR transition work group to include Section 504 students
- Expand the DVR transition work group to include youth from the Juvenile Justice System
- Include guidance counselors and school nursing staff in DVR outreach activities
- Annually identify 504 coordinators and special education staff for each school
- Explore developing a transition planning guide for 504 students
- Maintain DVR presence at Special Education conferences and continue outreach to special education teachers
- Develop a strategic plan for transition services o Research RSA's emerging practices for youth services

• *Rural Alaska*

- Continue DVR rural work group to identify realistic goals for rural services; strategies for meeting these goals; and convey this information to VR field staff
- Ensure funds are available for VR counselors to travel to rural areas
- Maintain strong relationships with TVR partners
- Train Job Center staff in rural areas on disability related issues
- Work with partners to ensure rural Job Centers have AT resources reasonable to the area

3. What are the vocational rehabilitation services needs of individuals with disabilities who are served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system?

Under WIA legislation, DVR is a partner in the statewide job training and employment service delivery system. DVR is the only agency in the system whose primary focus is individuals with a disability. Job seekers including those with a disability can access this system through the Job Centers.

Summary/Discussion of Data Findings

Direct Service Delivery

DVR counseling offices are currently co-located in six One-Stop Job Centers. DVR counselors rely on rural Job Center staff when traveling to the outlying areas to identify potential referrals, and coordinate service. DVR surveys indicated that employment staff and VR counselors are working together collaboratively and communicating effectively in the non-rural Job Centers or where co-location occurs. The basis for positive relationships among Job Center and DVR staff is service to co-enrolled individuals.

Individuals with a variety of disabilities continue to access core services at the Job Centers such as job search, resume writing, internet access and workshops. Yet, as many Job Center staff know about DVR and our available services as those who do not.

Administration

VR program regulations at 34 CFR 361.23 and Section 121(c) of WIA, along with WIA implementing regulations at 20 CFR 662.300, require that a MOU governing operations of the One-Stop service delivery system in a local area be developed and executed between the One-Stop service delivery system partners.

Alaska has established the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) as required under Section 111(b) of WIA that is charged with overseeing the statewide workforce investment system. Because the AWIB sets policies and makes decisions affecting cost-sharing among all partners in the One-Stop service delivery system, it is important to the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) how DVR is represented on the AWIB and what impact the Board has on the state VR program.

Needs/Concerns

Direct Service Delivery

- Job Center staff require on-going training on aspects of disabilities including AT and DVR's programs and the services we provide

Administration

- Partner agencies in Job Centers must have MOUs in place in accordance with federal statutes
- DVR must be represented on the AWIB in accordance with federal statutes

Recommendations

Direct Service Delivery

- Ensure Job Center staff are regularly trained or made aware of DVR and our services. This is especially true of Job Centers that are served by DVR on an itinerant basis.
- DVR leadership team and managers continue to identify functional Job Center issues that require on-going work at all levels of the division including the Job Center integration committee and the local Job Center management teams.
- Work with Job Centers to develop a means to provide information about DVR to individuals who self-identify as having a disability and who receive job training services through a Job Center
- Develop a referral process to the Job Center employment networks.
- Train DVR staff to use Job Center services

Administration

- DVR administration works with partner agencies to develop required MOUs for local Job Centers
- DVR Director works with the AWIB Executive Director to ensure DVR has appropriate representation on the AWIB in alignment with federal statutes

4. What is the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs (CRPs) within the state?

Summary/Discussion of Data Findings

DVR continually assess the need to develop and improve CRPs within the state. It is an on-going challenge. DVR approves CRPs to deliver vocational rehabilitation related services when there is no other agency available to license the service. Traditionally most of the CRPs are small businesses. DVR relies on CRPs to provide VR services to assist in the success of DVR program participants.

Needs/Concerns

- More CRPs are needed statewide, particularly in rural Alaska
- CRPs require on-going training including services to individuals with multiple disabilities or multiple impediments to employment Recommendations/Strategies
- Market CRP as a career to current Direct Service Professionals through presentations at Full Lives Conferences and collaboration with the Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers
- Maximize training opportunities for current CRPs such as expanding internet training • Provide staff training on CRP identified needs
- Work with rural VR counselors to identify potential rural CRPs and continue to look for opportunities to recruit CRPs such teachers in rural areas
- DVR continues to evaluate CRPs for quality services and areas to improve services to DVR participants
- CRP specialist facilitates discussion between CRPs on promising practices, issues, etc.

This screen was last updated on Apr 29 2014 6:34PM by Teresa Pitt

Attachment 4.11(b) Annual Estimates

- Identify the number of individuals in the state who are eligible for services.
- Identify the number of eligible individuals who will receive services provided with funds under:
 - Part B of Title I;
 - Part B of Title VI;
 - each priority category, if under an order of selection.
- Identify the cost of services for the number of individuals estimated to be eligible for services. If under an order of selection, identify the cost of services for each priority category.

The 2013 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate (Table S1810), estimates there are 48,882 individuals or 10.6% of the Alaskan population between the ages of 18 to 64 with a disability. In FFY2013, Alaska DVR served 2,145 individuals under an Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) using Title I and Title VI, Part B funding. Of these, DVR provided 211 individuals with supported employment services under an IPE using Title VI, Part B funds.

DVR was not operating under an Order of Selection during FFY2013 as there was adequate funding and qualified staff to provide services identified in IPEs to all eligible individuals. DVR anticipates this availability of qualified staff and funding will continue during FFY2015. Throughout the year, DVR will continue to closely monitor expenditures and obligations in relationship to VR participant numbers as well as staffing patterns to ensure DVR's ability to provide VR services to all eligible individuals.

Analysis of Funding:

- DVR will continue to receive \$100,000 through Project Search to supplant DVR funds to serve youth with developmental disabilities.
- The SFY2015 budget beginning July 1, 2014 has DVR funded at the same level as prior years for client services.
- During FFY 2013, DVR collected over twice the amount of Social Security receipts as in FFY2012. DVR has maintained this same level of reimbursements during FFY2014. Reimbursements are not expected to continue at this level.
- There continues to be adequate Title VI, Part B funding for supported employment services.
- DVR was able to obtain additional Federal funds through the reallocation process for use during FFY2013 and expects to request additional Federal funds to be used for FFY2015 VR services. DVR did not request additional Federal funds for FFY2014.

Category	Title I or Title VI	Estimated Funds	Estimated Number to be Served	Average Cost of Services
Eligible individuals receiving services	Title I	\$5,000,000	2,145	\$2,331
Eligible individuals receiving services	Title VI	\$400,000	211	\$1,895
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Totals		\$5,400,000	2,356	\$2,292

This screen was last updated on Apr 10 2014 4:10PM by Teresa Pitt

Attachment 4.11(c)(1) State Goals and Priorities

The goals and priorities are based on the comprehensive statewide assessment, on requirements related to the performance standards and indicators, and on other information about the state agency. (See section 101(a)(15)(C) of the Act.) This attachment should be updated when there are material changes in the information that require the description to be amended.

- Identify if the goals and priorities were jointly developed and agreed to by the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has a council.
- Identify if the state VR agency and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the state has such a council, jointly reviewed the goals and priorities and jointly agreed to any revisions.
- Identify the goals and priorities in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs.
- Ensure that the goals and priorities are based on an analysis of the following areas:
 - the most recent comprehensive statewide assessment, including any updates;
 - the performance of the state on standards and indicators; and
 - other available information on the operation and effectiveness of the VR program, including any reports received from the State Rehabilitation Council and findings and recommendations from monitoring activities conducted under section 107.

DVR and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Council (SVRC) including representatives of the AVIRS programs and the SILC, developed goals and priorities for the state vocational rehabilitation (VR) program during the strategic planning process. DVR's strategic plan is tied to the three year cycle of the Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) with interim progress assessments regarding goals and priorities.

The strategic planning process is comprehensive and includes defining the agency's mission, principles, goals, priorities, strategies and measurements. Input for the development of the goals, priorities and strategies came from the CSNA; public comment taken at the SVCR's quarterly meetings; ongoing consumer satisfaction surveys; and other program evaluation activities including the case file review, MIS reports and monitoring activities. DVR continuously monitors its progress towards meeting the standards and indicators and makes necessary adjustments to priorities and strategies as required. Specific strategies to achieve these goals and priorities are detailed in Attachment 4.11(d).

The goals, priorities and progress are reviewed quarterly by the DVR management team and discussed with the SVRC at their quarterly meetings. Adjustments are made as required.

Mission

The mission of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation is to assist individuals with disabilities to obtain and maintain employment.

Guiding Principles

DVR believes in:

- The empowering value of employment in an individual's life.
- Honoring and respecting each individual's strengths, skills, choices, abilities and cultural identity.
- Developing strong partnerships with Tribal Vocational Rehabilitation programs, schools, job-centers and centers for independent living.
- Delivering high quality vocational rehabilitation services.
- Employing and developing highly qualified and skilled rehabilitation staff.
- The principles of stewardship in the use of public resources.

Goal 1 - Service Delivery: DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

This goal reflects DVR's continued focus on improving the VR service delivery system with the priorities and strategies identified by the CSNA.

Priority 1.1: Improve VR services to transition age youth

Strategies:

- Explore the use of social media to connect youth to VR services
- Design web page with youth focus
- Analyze why and when youth are dropping out of the VR program
- Participate in Project Search, Tapestry and Integrated Employment Initiative (IEI) grants
- Through participation in the IEI grant, increase the employment hour of youth with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (IDD)
- Connect with the DOLWD Youth First grantees
- Research the use of Work Keys in school systems and use by employers
- Outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities such as the McLaughlin Youth Center
- Expand the DVR transition work group to include Section 504 students
- Expand the DVR transition work group to include youth from the Juvenile Justice System
- Annually identify 504 coordinators and special education staff for each school
- Include guidance counselors and school nursing staff in DVR outreach activities
- Explore developing a transition planning guide for 504 students
- Maintain DVR presence at Special Education conferences and continue outreach to special education teachers
- Convene focus group made up of youth with an emphasis on communication and engagement strategies
- Develop a strategic plan for transition services
- Research RSA's emerging practices for youth services
- Partner with the Division of Senior and Disability Services to improve the employment opportunities for youth with IDD or with a traumatic brain injury

Priority 1.2: Improve VR services in rural Alaska.

Strategies:

- Continue DVR rural work group to identify realistic goals for rural services; develop strategies for meeting these goals; and convey this information to VR field staff
- Maintain strong relationships with TVR and Job Center partners
- Train Job Center staff in rural areas on disability related issues
- Work with partners to ensure rural Job Centers have AT resources
- Develop partnerships with other state agencies providing rural services in Alaska
- Identify locations and establish a travel schedule for rural areas other than the hub communities
- Develop CRPs in rural Alaska
- Establish qualifications for CRPs serving rural locations
- Review MOA with TVR Consortium annually
- Maximize the use of technology for the service delivery
- SVRC travels to a rural location once a year
- Ensure funds are available for VR counselors to travel to rural areas
- Make use of video conferencing available through the state library system (OWL)
- Continue to research uses of technology for long distance service delivery

Priority 1.3: Ensure on-going support for services to individuals who experience blindness or a visual impairment

Strategies:

- Continue to support the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (the Center) and other efforts within DVR to ensure our obligation as a combined agency are met
- Continue Division support for the Blind Services Team
- Maintain membership in Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the blind and Visually Impaired
- Remain active in the National Council of State Agencies for Blind

Priority 1.4: Ensure in-house VR provided services are effective.

Strategies:

- Contract with the TACE to provide an overall analysis of statewide VR in-house services including the level of provision including statewide access, the overall effectiveness of the services and their place in the statewide WIA system
- Review current statewide standards and modify/develop as needed: standards for workshops, definitions of services and level of services including use compared to capacity
- Analyze the relationship of in-house VR services to case movement
- Develop mechanisms for matching evaluation to outcomes
- Ensure all staff have required knowledge for use of in-house services

Priority 1.5: DVR will meet or exceed state and federal performance standards

Strategies:

- Research practices of other public VR programs in timely IPE development
- Increase outreach to individuals with minority backgrounds
- Outreach to the Asian community through the Anchorage Asian Alaskan Cultural Center
- Chief of Field Services is liaison to the Alaska Vocational Rehabilitation Tribal Consortium

Priority 1.6: DVR will purchase effective services from qualified CRPs

Strategies:

- Develop a mechanism for matching CRP services to outcomes
- Share information with VR staff and CRPs for continued input and improvement
- Ensure an adequate number of CRPs and/or DVR staff who are trained to provide benefit analysis (BA) in order for SSA beneficiaries to understand the impact of work on their benefits
- Market CRP as a career to current Direct Service Professionals through presentations at Full Lives Conferences and collaboration with the Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers
- Provide staff training on CRP identified needs
- Work with rural VR counselors to identify potential rural CRPs
- DVR continues to evaluate CRPs for quality services and areas to improve services to DVR participants
- CRP Facilities Specialist facilitates discussion between CRPs on promising practices, issues, etc.

Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

This goal reflects the value DVR places on well trained staff and the serious need for succession planning with the anticipated loss of key staff in the near future.

Priority 2.1: Recruit and retain qualified staff.

Strategies:

- Develop consistent statewide tools for evaluating employee performance, annual review, training needs and for promotional purposes
- Maximize training funds to support VR Counselors in graduate level rehabilitation programs
- Provide relevant training opportunities to staff such as Motivational Interviewing
- Internships
- Provide CRC credit for training
- Develop tools and strategies to consistently deliver “Customer Service Excellence” at all levels to both internal and external customers

Priority 2.2: Leadership development and succession planning

Strategies:

- Support staff participation in leadership training programs such as Emerging Leaders, the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute, etc.
- Develop a succession plan
- Make staff aware of educational and long range employment opportunities within DVR

Goal 3 –DVR will provide leadership in the workforce system

This goal is intended to strengthen our connection to other programs that serve individuals with disabilities.

Priority 3.1: DVR will maintain a leadership role in expanding vocational opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities

Strategies:

- Establish criteria for support and participation in new initiatives
- Develop procedures for referring individuals exiting DVR employed who are SSA Ticket to Work (TTW) holders to Employment Networks (EN) using the Partnership Plus model. (Job Center ENs and others as they become available)
- Ensure Job Center staff are regularly trained or made aware of DVR and VR services.

- DVR leadership team and managers continue to identify functional Job Center issues that require on-going work at all levels of the division including the Job Center Integration Committee (JCIC) and the local Job Center management teams.
- Work with Job Centers to obtain information on individuals who self-identify as having a disability
- Support the National Governor's Association Chair initiative; "A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities"
- Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services for individuals who are in need of long term supported employment services
- Support the Employment First Initiative
- Support efforts to establish vocational services from community behavioral health providers
- Continue Chief of Rehabilitation Services participation in the Vets Success meetings
- Continue support for DVR business point of contact to the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) National Employment Team (the Net)
- Examine the role of DVR staff on boards, councils, and advisory groups
- Seek membership or stronger representation on the Alaska Workforce Investment board
- Support the State as a Model Employer (SAME) initiative and serve on the steering committee
- Support the Integrated Employment Initiative and serve on the advisory board
- Support current Project Search sites and serve on the steering committee
- Support the Tapestry project and serve on the advisory board
- Serve on the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
- Serve on the Alaska Mental Health board
- Serve on the Statewide Independent Living Council
- Serve on the Community and Public Transportation Advisory board
- Serve on the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired board

This screen was last updated on Jun 24 2013 2:31PM by Teresa Pitt

Attachment 4.11(c)(3) Order of Selection

- Identify the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services.
- Identify the justification for the order.
- Identify the service and outcome goals.
- Identify the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category within the order.
- Describe how individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for services before all other individuals with disabilities.

This agency is not implementing an Order of Selection.

This screen was last updated on Jun 22 2009 6:59PM by saakmcintoshj

Attachment 4.11(c)(4) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

Specify the state's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

In FFY 2013, DVR:

- was allocated \$300,000 in Title VI, Part B funds;
- spent \$277,632 of Title VI, Part B funds and an additional \$75,000 of Project Search monies to provide VR services to individuals eligible for Title VI, Part B funding;
- served 211 individuals in supported employment (SE) plans;
- closed 53 individuals rehabilitated; and
- closed 31 individuals other than rehabilitated.

For FFY2015, DVR understand that the President's budget has combined the Title VI, Part B and Title I appropriations. If this is the case, DVR will continue to provide the required VR services statewide to individuals who qualify for supported employment services. We anticipate there will be adequate funding to meet the VR needs of all eligible individuals including those requiring SE services.

Goal:

In FFY2015, DVR will seek to provide SE services to 211 individuals and assist 60 individuals in obtaining competitive employment.

DVR's SE program is potentially available to any individual with a most significant disability who needs such services to be successfully and competitively employed. Supported employment monies are used for the time-limited services necessary for an individual to stabilize in competitive employment in an integrated setting.

Priorities for the maintenance and expansion of SE services include the following:

1. Emphasize community based, integrated employment settings with the Governor's Council on Disability and Special Education, the Alaska Mental Health Board, community behavioral health programs and the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority (the Trust) to increase vocational programs within the mental health service delivery system.
2. Pursue increased long-term state funding for SE; work to reduce the waitlist for DD services.

3. Explore opportunities for CRPs and other entities to become employment networks to provide long-term supports.

4. Work with the community mental health system to increase and reinstate work related programs within community mental health programs statewide

This screen was last updated on Apr 29 2014 6:37PM by Teresa Pitt

Attachment 4.11(d) State's Strategies

This attachment should include required strategies and how the agency will use these strategies to achieve its goals and priorities, support innovation and expansion activities, and overcome any barriers to accessing the vocational rehabilitation and the supported employment programs. (See sections 101(a)(15)(D) and (18)(B) of the Act and Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA)).

Describe the methods to be used to expand and improve services to individuals with disabilities.

DVR is committed to expanding and improving VR services in Alaska in order to maximize employment opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities. To first identify needed improvements to VR services, DVR has implemented a continuous improvement model through strategic planning and data analysis. Efforts to expand the service delivery system include collaborations with other agencies that provide services to people with disabilities, especially for those identified as priority populations through the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). Strategic planning also gives DVR the opportunity to concentrate on the principles of efficient uses of personnel, technology, and financial resources.

Specific grants and collaborative efforts include:

- Support the National Governor's Association Chair initiative; "A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities"
- Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services for individuals who are in need of long term supported employment services
- Support the Employment First Initiative
- Support efforts to establish vocational services from community behavioral health providers
- Continue Chief of Rehabilitation Services participation in the Vets Success meetings
- Continue support for DVR business point of contact to the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) National Employment Team (the Net
- Seek membership or stronger representation on the Alaska Workforce Investment board
- Support the State as a Model Employer (SAME) initiative and serve on the steering committee
- Support the Integrated Employment Initiative and serve on the advisory board
- Support current Project Search sites and serve on the steering committee
- Support the Tapestry project and serve on the advisory board
- Serve on the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
- Serve on the Alaska Mental Health board
- Serve on the Statewide Independent Living Council
- Serve on the Community and Public Transportation Advisory board
- Serve on the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired board

Identify how a broad range of assistive technology services and assistive technology devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities at each stage of the rehabilitation process; and describe how assistive technology services and devices will be provided to individuals with disabilities on a statewide basis.

DVR's policy on assistive technology (AT) states that AT devices and services must be expressly considered as a potential service for all applicants and eligible individuals as a component of the assessment to determine eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs and throughout the IPE service delivery process. AT is commonly thought of as an application to improve physical functions such as mobility, speech, and hearing with its potential also considered for assisting individuals with cognitive, emotional, or behavioral disabilities as well (for example, a memory or scheduling device to assist an individual with a learning disability with organization and recall). Because AT is constantly evolving, staff continually needs to reassess whether rehabilitation technology solutions exist.

DVR also has an expert on staff who assures that electronic communication used by DVR staff and participants is fully accessible to all, including those using visual aids and those who are deaf.

All VR counselors statewide have access to AT services and devices for the individuals they serve through statewide counselor/evaluator AT training; through statewide assessment services for AT from both in-house evaluators and services provided through ATLA as funded by a state grant under The Assistive Technology Act of 1998; and through services and devices available through the statewide Job Center Network. The services in the Job Centers are funded through the Disability Employment Initiative grant awarded to the AWIB. This grant includes training disability navigators and improves assistive technology capacity at each job center to better serve individuals with disabilities. Alaska DVR works directly with this initiative as a partner.

Specific examples of potential AT at different stages of the rehab process include the following evaluative questions and approaches:

Applicant

- Are accommodations needed for the person to participate in the rehab process?
- Is the applicant now using AT?
- Would AT enhance, create or eliminate the threat of job loss or affect health for this applicant?
- Would use of technology create an opportunity for this applicant that might otherwise not exist?

Extended Evaluation

- Does a person with this type of disability generally need accommodations to complete a vocational evaluation?
- Would providing technology offer the opportunity to explore vocational goals that would not be considered otherwise?

Eligible

- What barriers does the disability create in working toward the vocational objective?
- Review technology which the individual currently uses to determine if it can be used in achieving the vocational goal.
- Would technology potentially assist the client in overcoming any barriers?
- Does the individual have any concerns about the use of technology in working toward the vocational goal?

Plan

- What previously unidentified barriers to receiving services does the disability potentially create?
- What technology could potentially assist in meeting these barriers?

Employment

- What barriers to searching or obtaining work does the person's functional limitations create?
- Will any reasonable accommodation be needed for the application process?
- Does the individual have concerns about the use or potential need for technology in finding or maintaining a job?

Closure

- Were possible barriers/problems that the individual faced clearly identified?
- Does the individual have any concerns about using technology-related services?
- Does the employer have concerns about technology use on the job?

Post-Employment

- Have any "major life activities" or "essential functions" of the job changed?
- If so, did this result in a need for change in technology?
- Would technology potentially assist in overcoming these barriers?

Identify what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who are minorities, including those with the most significant disabilities; and what outreach procedures will be used to identify and serve individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the VR program.

The FY2013 CSNA analyzed the following groups to determine any underserved or unserved populations: disability types, age specific to transition youth and the elderly, location (rural or non-rural), minorities and gender. Data comparisons included five year data sets of DVR participants and national data from the US Census Bureau and SSA. The DVR data also included

a further reporting of successful closures versus those closed unsuccessfully to ascertain a potential bias in the delivery of services.

Needs/Concerns from the CSNA

- Asian Alaskans appear to be slightly underserved
- Rural Alaskans are underserved with many Alaskan Natives living in rural Alaska
- Transition age youth continue to be a priority population for DVR

Recommendations/Strategies *Minority Background*

- Outreach to the Asian population through the Anchorage Asian Alaskan Cultural center

Transition Age Youth

- Outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities such as the McLaughlin Youth Center
- Expand the DVR transition work group to include Section 504 students
- Expand the DVR transition work group to include youth from the Juvenile Justice System
- Include guidance counselors and school nursing staff in DVR outreach activities
- Annually identify 504 coordinators and special education staff for each school
- Explore developing a transition planning guide for 504 students
- Maintain DVR presence at Special Education conferences and continue outreach to special education teachers
- Develop a strategic plan for transition services
- Research RSA's emerging practices for youth services

Rural Alaska

- Continue DVR rural work group to identify realistic goals for rural services; strategies for meeting these goals; and convey this information to VR field staff
- Ensure funds are available for VR counselors to travel to rural areas
- Maintain strong relationships with TVR partners
- Train Job Center staff in rural areas on disability related issues
- Work with partners to ensure rural Job Centers have AT resources reasonable to the area

If applicable, identify plans for establishing, developing, or improving community rehabilitation programs within the state.

DVR continually assess the need to develop and improve CRPs within the state. It is an on-going challenge. DVR approves CRPs to deliver vocational rehabilitation related services when there is no other agency available to license the service. Traditionally most of the CRPs are small businesses. DVR relies on CRPs to provide VR services to assist in the success of DVR program participants.

Needs/Concerns from the FY2013 CSNA

- More CRPs are needed statewide, particularly in rural Alaska

Recommendations/Strategies

- Market CRP as a career to current Direct Service Professionals through presentations at Full Lives Conferences and collaboration with the Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers
- Maximize training opportunities for current CRPs such as expanding internet training
- Provide staff training on CRP identified needs
- Work with rural VR counselors to identify potential rural CRPs and continue to look for opportunities to recruit CRPs such teachers in rural areas
- DVR continues to evaluate CRPs for quality services and areas to improve services to DVR participants
- CRP specialist facilitates discussion between CRPs on promising practices, issues, etc.

Describe strategies to improve the performance of the state with respect to the evaluation standards and performance indicators.

DVR met all the federal standards and indicators in FY2012. DVR strives for continuous improvement in all areas of the agency. To maintain and/or improve this level of performance, DVR continually monitors the data throughout the year for anomalies or trends.

Strategies include:

- Formalize training for new staff on production goals and AWARE case management tools
- Disseminate information to staff on a regular basis on production statewide and the their part in the bigger picture
- Continually monitor current production and reports to ensure DVR continues to meet the standards

Describe strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

DVR counseling offices are currently co-located in six One-Stop Job Centers. DVR counselors rely on rural Job Center staff when traveling to the outlying areas to identify potential referrals, and coordinate service. DVR surveys indicated that employment staff and VR counselors are working together collaboratively and communicating effectively in the non-rural Job Centers or where co-location occurs. The basis for positive relationships among Job Center and DVR staff is service to co-enrolled individuals.

Individuals with a variety of disabilities continue to access core services at the Job Centers such as job search, resume writing, internet access and workshops. Yet, as many Job Center staff know about DVR and our available services as those who do not.

DVR will work to:

- Ensure Job Center staff are regularly trained or made aware of DVR and our services. This is especially true of Job Centers that are served by DVR on an itinerant basis.
- DVR leadership team and managers continue to identify functional Job Center issues that require on-going work at all levels of the division including the Job Center integration committee and the local Job Center management teams
- Work with Job Centers to develop a means to provide information about DVR to individuals who self-identify as having a disability and who receive job training services through a Job Center
- Develop a referral process to the Job Center employment networks
- Train DVR staff to use Job Center services
- DVR administration works with partner agencies to develop required MOUs for local Job Centers
- DVR Director works with the AWIB Executive Director to ensure DVR has appropriate representation on the AWIB in alignment with federal statutes

Describe how the agency's strategies will be used to:

- achieve goals and priorities identified in Attachment 4.11(c)(1);
- support innovation and expansion activities; and
- overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the state Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the state Supported Employment Services Program.

Alaska DVR engages in an ongoing strategic planning process and data analysis, focusing on continual improvement activities to enhance services and maximize the number and quality of employment outcomes, especially for those identified as priority populations through the comprehensive statewide needs assessment (CSNA). Strategic planning also gives DVR the opportunity to concentrate on the principles of efficient uses of personnel, technology, and financial resources to deliver quality rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities. Expanding and improving services remains an agency priority as the needs and demographics of individuals with disabilities evolve through the CSNA, data analysis and on-going surveys.

The strategic planning team includes VR fiscal people, VR managers and the VR leadership team, the chair of the SRC, a representative from CAP, a CIL director and a representative from the AIVR programs. The strategic planning process includes an annual face-to-face statewide planning meeting as well as quarterly progress reports with DVR staff and the SRC. The goals, priorities, strategies, performance measures and outcomes found in the strategic plan are developed using information from the CSNA, on-going data analysis from DVR's MIS/case

management system, satisfaction surveys and other program evaluation and quality assurance initiatives. The goals and priorities are identified in Attachment 4.11(c) (1). The strategies to accomplish the goals, to overcome the barriers, and to expand and improve services to Alaskans with disabilities are identified in this attachment.

Goal 1 - Service Delivery: DVR will deliver high quality vocational rehabilitation services to people with disabilities to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

This goal reflects DVR's continued focus on improving the VR service delivery system with the priorities and strategies identified by the CSNA.

Priority 1.1: Improve VR services to transition age youth

Strategies:

- Explore the use of social media to connect youth to VR services
- Design web page with youth focus
- Analyze why and when youth are dropping out of the VR program
- Participate in Project Search, Tapestry and Integrated Employment Initiative (IEI) grants
- Through participation in the IEI grant, increase the employment hour of youth with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities (IDD)
- Connect with the DOLWD Youth First grantees
- Research the use of Work Keys in school systems and use by employers
- Outreach to alternative schools and youth correctional facilities such as the McLaughlin Youth Center
- Expand the DVR transition work group to include Section 504 students
- Expand the DVR transition work group to include youth from the Juvenile Justice System
- Annually identify 504 coordinators and special education staff for each school
- Include guidance counselors and school nursing staff in DVR outreach activities
- Explore developing a transition planning guide for 504 students
- Maintain DVR presence at Special Education conferences and continue outreach to special education teachers
- Convene focus group made up of youth with an emphasis on communication and engagement strategies
- Develop a strategic plan for transition services
- Research RSA's emerging practices for youth services
- Partner with the Division of Senior and Disability Services to improve the employment opportunities for youth with IDD or with a traumatic brain injury

Priority 1.2: Improve VR services in rural Alaska.

Strategies:

- Continue DVR rural work group to identify realistic goals for rural services; develop strategies for meeting these goals; and convey this information to VR field staff
- Maintain strong relationships with TVR and Job Center partners
- Train Job Center staff in rural areas on disability related issues
- Work with partners to ensure rural Job Centers have AT resources
- Develop partnerships with other state agencies providing rural services in Alaska
- Identify locations and establish a travel schedule for rural areas other than the hub communities
- Develop CRPs in rural Alaska
- Establish qualifications for CRPs serving rural locations
- Review MOA with TVR Consortium annually
- Maximize the use of technology for the service delivery
- SVRC travels to a rural location once a year
- Ensure funds are available for VR counselors to travel to rural areas
- Make use of video conferencing available through the state library system (OWL)
- Continue to research uses of technology for long distance service delivery

Priority 1.3: Ensure on-going support for services to individuals who experience blindness or a visual impairment

Strategies:

- Continue to support the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (the Center) and other efforts within DVR to ensure our obligation as a combined agency are met
- Continue Division support for the Blind Services Team
- Maintain membership in Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the blind and Visually Impaired
- Remain active in the National Council of State Agencies for Blind

Priority 1.4: Ensure in-house VR provided services are effective.

Strategies:

- Contract with the TACE to provide an overall analysis of statewide VR in-house services including the level of provision including statewide access, the overall effectiveness of the services and their place in the statewide WIA system
- Review current statewide standards and modify/develop as needed: standards for workshops, definitions of services and level of services including use compared to capacity
- Analyze the relationship of in-house VR services to case movement
- Develop mechanisms for matching evaluation to outcomes
- Ensure all staff have required knowledge for use of in-house services

Priority 1.5: DVR will meet or exceed state and federal performance standards

Strategies:

- Research practices of other public VR programs in timely IPE development
- Increase outreach to individuals with minority backgrounds
- Outreach to the Asian community through the Anchorage Asian Alaskan Cultural Center
- Chief of Field Services is liaison to the Alaska Vocational Rehabilitation Tribal Consortium

Priority 1.6: DVR will purchase effective services from qualified CRPs

Strategies:

- Develop a mechanism for matching CRP services to outcomes
- Share information with VR staff and CRPs for continued input and improvement
- Ensure an adequate number of CRPs and/or DVR staff who are trained to provide benefit analysis (BA) in order for SSA beneficiaries to understand the impact of work on their benefits
- Market CRP as a career to current Direct Service Professionals through presentations at Full Lives Conferences and collaboration with the Alaska Alliance for Direct Service Careers
- Provide staff training on CRP identified needs
- Work with rural VR counselors to identify potential rural CRPs
- DVR continues to evaluate CRPs for quality services and areas to improve services to DVR participants
- CRP Facilities Specialist facilitates discussion between CRPs on promising practices, issues, etc.

Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

This goal reflects the value DVR places on well trained staff and the serious need for succession planning with the anticipated loss of key staff in the near future.

Priority 2.1: Recruit and retain qualified staff.

Strategies:

- Develop consistent statewide tools for evaluating employee performance, annual review, training needs and for promotional purposes
- Maximize training funds to support VR Counselors in graduate level rehabilitation programs
- Provide relevant training opportunities to staff such as Motivational Interviewing
- Internships
- Provide CRC credit for training

- Develop tools and strategies to consistently deliver “Customer Service Excellence” at all levels to both internal and external customers

Priority 2.2: Leadership development and succession planning

Strategies:

- Support staff participation in leadership training programs such as Emerging Leaders, the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute, etc.
- Develop a succession plan
- Make staff aware of educational and long range employment opportunities within DVR

Goal 3 –DVR will provide leadership in the workforce system

This goal is intended to strengthen our connection to other programs that serve individuals with disabilities.

Priority 3.1: DVR will maintain a leadership role in expanding vocational opportunities for Alaskans with disabilities

Strategies:

- Establish criteria for support and participation in new initiatives
- Develop procedures for referring individuals exiting DVR employed who are SSA Ticket to Work (TTW) holders to Employment Networks (EN) using the Partnership Plus model. (Job Center ENs and others as they become available)
- Ensure Job Center staff are regularly trained or made aware of DVR and VR services.
- DVR leadership team and managers continue to identify functional Job Center issues that require on-going work at all levels of the division including the Job Center Integration Committee (JCIC) and the local Job Center management teams.
- Work with Job Centers to obtain information on individuals who self-identify as having a disability
- Support the National Governor’s Association Chair initiative; “A Better Bottom Line: Employing People with Disabilities”
- Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services for individuals who are in need of long term supported employment services
- Support the Employment First Initiative
- Support efforts to establish vocational services from community behavioral health providers
- Continue Chief of Rehabilitation Services participation in the Vets Success meetings
- Continue support for DVR business point of contact to the Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation (CSAVR) National Employment Team (the Net)
- Examine the role of DVR staff on boards, councils, and advisory groups

- Seek membership or stronger representation on the Alaska Workforce Investment board
- Support the State as a Model Employer (SAME) initiative and serve on the steering committee
- Support the Integrated Employment Initiative and serve on the advisory board
- Support current Project Search sites and serve on the steering committee
- Support the Tapestry project and serve on the advisory board
- Serve on the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education
- Serve on the Alaska Mental Health board
- Serve on the Statewide Independent Living Council
- Serve on the Community and Public Transportation Advisory board
- Serve on the Alaska Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired board

Utilization of the Funds Reserved for Innovation and Expansion Activities

DVR sets aside a portion of funds allotted under Section 110 of the Act for development and implementation of innovative approaches to improve the provision of VR services, particularly for individuals with the most significant disabilities. DVR has used in these funds in the past and plans on continuing to use these funds in support of the SILC and the SVRC as well as any appropriate activities that would meet the criteria of innovative and expansive approaches to the delivery of VR services. The SVRC is a full and active partner in the development of agency policies, regulations and procedures. The SVRC collaborates with DVR to hold public meetings in different areas around the state each year. These meetings are another way for DVR to identify needs and to gather trend information for strategic planning. DVR also supports the SILC. The director of DVR is a member of the SILC and a DVR representative participates in the development of the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL).

This screen was last updated on Apr 10 2014 7:49PM by Teresa Pitt

Attachment 4.11(e)(2) Evaluation and Reports of Progress

Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and Supported Employment (SE) Goals

1. Clearly identify all VR program goals consistent with the goals described in the FY 2013 Attachment 4.11(c)(1), including an evaluation of the extent to which the VR program goals were achieved.

- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Goal 1 – Service Delivery: DVR will provide high quality services to all eligible individuals to assist them in obtaining employment consistent with their career goals.

Priority 1. Transition services for youth with disabilities

Outcome for FFY2013:

- * Rehabilitation rate for youth was 61.2% which exceeds the Federal S&I 1.2 of 55.8%
- * 22% of all applicants were youth
- * 22.8% (137) of all those individuals closed rehabilitated were youth at application
- * 25.1% of all individuals participating in the VR program were youth at application
- * For youth closed rehabilitated, the average hourly wage was \$11.12, well above the minimum wage of \$7.75 and the average number of hours worked at closure was 28.4 hours per week.
- * DVR continued its emphasis on youth transition services in FY2013 with the hiring of a new transition coordinator

Strategies contributing to success:

- * Counselors in Fairbanks, Anchorage and Wasilla assigned as Project Search Counselors in high schools
- * DVR transition team includes all VR counselors assigned to high schools and the transition coordinator continues to meet monthly
- * Transition coordinator provides annual training at AK State Special Education Conference
- * On-going efforts to expand transition services to include Section 504 students and the Division of Juvenile Justice (DJJ)

- * DVR staff participates in bi-monthly Job Corp meetings
- * On-going effort to maintain relationships with school district staff directly involved with students who experience a disability; Annually identify 504 coordinators and Special Education staff in each school
- * Continue to explore and expand the use of social media to connect youth to VR services
- * Participated in the youth focused Project Search, Tapestry grant and the Integrated Employment Initiative (IEI). The Tapestry grant is a postsecondary transition project managed by the U of AK, Center for Human Development. The IEI is a partnership with the Division of Senior and Disability Services to improve the employment opportunities for youth with an intellectual or developmental disability or with a traumatic brain injury
- * Maintained DVR presence at Special Education conferences and continued outreach to special education teachers
- * Continued to educate school staff on DVR's mission as it relates to referrals
- * Updated web site with tools including a video for special education teachers
- * Provided on-going TA and support to the Tapestry and Project Search programs
- * Participated on AIEI management team and related oversight efforts with that initiative.
- * Coordinating meetings with both Office of Children's Services and DJJ.
- * Spoke at state-wide video conference with DJJ.
- * Provided Discovery training to DJJ staff
- * New referral form & referral guidance for schools developed with a focus on 504 eligible students

Factors impeding progress:

- * Post-secondary students are often very transient
- * Youth have different communication styles than more traditional methods, i.e. anecdotal information suggests texting has become the preferred method of communication. DVR needs to determine best way to communicate to reduce number of youth who are lost after applying for VR services
- * Staff turnover in school districts

Priority 2.DVR remains off an Order of Selection

Outcome:

- * DVR was not on an Order of Selection in FY2013

Strategies contributing to success:

- * DVR was able to maintain current staffing levels
- * DVR was able to take advantage of Federal reallocation funds
- * Aggressive filing of Social Security reimbursements
- * DVR continues to closely monitor expenditures and obligations

Factors impeding achievement:

- * None

Priority 3.Improving services in rural Alaska

Outcome:

- * DVR remains committed to improving services to rural Alaska. The number of counselors assigned to travel on an itinerant basis has increased. Even so, providing services to rural Alaska continues to be a challenge for DVR. The 2013 Comprehensive Statewide Needs Assessment (CSNA) identified rural Alaska as an underserved area.

Strategies contributing to success:

- * Continued partnerships with the AIVRS programs, the local Job Centers and other State agencies providing rural services
- * VR counselors are assigned to hub communities in Western Alaska and to other appropriate rural communities
- * Continued expansion of tools and resources that are not available in rural areas such as vocational evaluation tests/assessments for VR counselors to use when traveling
- * Rural services team continues to meet every other month
- * Transition coordinator assigned to rural services team
- * Travel funds were available for counselors to travel to rural communities
- * Piloting the use of the statewide OWL libraries video conferencing capabilities

- * Larger CRP expanding services for job placement and job search assistance to a rural community
- * DVR counselors participated in Rural Transition Camps
- * Trip planning/reporting tool developed for use by VR counselors
- * VR counselors and DVR staff continue to do outreach to develop new CRPs in rural Alaska
- * The SVRC continues to hold one quarterly meeting annually in a rural setting.

Factors impeding achievement:

- * Size of the state
- * Lack of services in rural Alaska
- * Lack of employment opportunities in rural Alaska
- * Census data suggest an out-migration from rural Alaska for people with disabilities to larger communities with more intensive services
- * Decline in applicants from rural Alaska, trend seen in Job Centers as well

Priority 4. Work with Job Center partners to improve services in job centers for people with disabilities

Outcomes:

- * Job Center surveys report that people with disabilities continue to use Job Center services
- * AT services are available in Job Centers Local MOUs are in place between DVR and partners
- * DVR collaborated with the Employment Security Division (ESD) on the implementation of the Disability Employment Initiative.
- * DVR worked with and supported ESD's effort for the One Stop Job Centers to become employment networks as part of the Ticket to Work initiative.

Strategies contributing to success:

- * Strong partnership between ESD and DVR to support services to individuals with disabilities in One Stop Job Centers at all levels of both organizations

- * DVR staff is on Job Center management teams and attend meetings
- * DVR clients volunteer at Jo Center
- * DVR staff continues to make presentations on VR services at local Job Centers
- * Collocation of WIA partner agencies in Job Centers in smaller communities

Factors impeding achievement:

- * Staff turnover in the Job Center
- * Job Centers in rural communities are served by VR counselors on an itinerant basis

Priority 5.Enhance the VR service delivery system through the use of technology

Outcome:

- * DVR has improved service delivery through the on-going exploration and the implementation of the application of technology

Strategies contributing to success:

- * iPads were purchased as an accommodation for DVR participants with hearing and other communicative impairments
- * Assigned a staff member the responsibility of researching and implementing new technologies
- * Expand the use of the Survey Monkey tool
- * Electronically send case files required for reviews
- * CRPs can apply on-line
- * Improved and expanded the functionality of DVR's intranet
- * Expanding use of case management system to include and disseminate job ready information
- * Implementation of web-site specifically designed for special education teachers

Factors impeding achievement:

- * The vastness and geophysical characteristics of the State limits fast internet services statewide
- * Infra-structure does not exist for high quality video conferencing State's band-width

* Financial resources

Priority 6. Develop new CRPs and/or enhance delivery of CRP services

Outcome:

* DVR staff and particularly DVR's CRP Specialist continue to work on developing well trained CRPs to meet our statewide needs

* CRPs are a priority in the current Strategic Plan

* Standards for CRPs have been developed and implemented

* Collaborated with and supported University of Alaska Center for Human Development to develop a two tiered approach to the training and monitoring of CRPs for the provision of benefits analysis.

Strategies contributing to success:

* CRP application process was revised

* Pay rate ranges have been established for each CRP service

* Minimum training, education and experience requirements have been established for each CRP service

* New, measureable case review criteria have been developed for statewide reviews

* DVR's CRP specialist made a presentation at the Full Lives Conference

* Local staff and regional managers work in the communities to establish new CRPs

* On-going evaluation and improvement to the CRP component of the case review system

Factors impeding achievement:

* Difficult to retain CRPs as most CRPs are single person operations

* Primary CRP in the State specializing in AT services cannot meet the demand

Priority 7. Meet or exceed federal performance standards

Outcome:

* DVR achieved successful performance on Evaluation Standard 1 (employment outcomes) and Evaluation Standard 2 (equal access) as defined in 34 CFR Part 361.82. DVR increased its performance in FFY2013 over FFY2012 in five of the seven indicators: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 and 2.1.

* Both indicators 1.3 and 1.4 exceeded the standard in excess of twenty-five percentage points.

* DVR did not achieve the same level as FY2012 for 1.1.

Strategies contributing to success:

* Well trained staff

* Resources to fill vacant positions

* Adequate case services funds

* Continual dissemination to staff of their role and progress towards meeting the performance measures

Factors impeding achievement:

* Slowing job market to maintain level of successful closures

Priority 8.Enhance and streamline Ticket to Work processes

Outcome:

* Social Security receipts increased from \$455,290 in FY2012 to \$1,054,049 in FY2013

Strategies contributing to success:

* Staff processing claims received additional training

* Internal claims submittal process analyzed and streamlined

* On-going efforts to automate claims and TTW tracking

Factors impeding achievement:

* None

Priority 9.Assess service delivery system for individuals who are blind or visually impaired to ensure on-going support

Outcome:

* The 2013 CSNA showed that DVR was adequately serving those individuals who are blind or visually impaired. DVR provided services at level to meet the requirement of a combined agency.

Strategies contributing to success:

* Blind Services team continues to meet and includes staff from the AK Center for the Blind and Visually Impaired (the Center)

* DVR dedicates Section 110 funds to blind services statewide

* DVR supported the Center's efforts to establish a benefits analyst

* A DVR counselor is on the board for the Center

* VR counselor assigned to Blind Services participates in community outreach on issues facing the blind and visually impaired

* All VR offices are able to provide services to the blind and visually impaired

Factors impeding achievement:

* The blind and visually impaired are a low incidence population, making it often difficult for the Center to have an adequate customer base

* The vastness of the state with limited resources in outlying areas

Goal 2 – Staff Development: DVR will recruit, employ, retain and train the most qualified and highly skilled rehabilitation staff.

Priority 1. Recruit and retain qualified staff

Outcome:

* DVR diligently ensures that all employees are fully qualified to provide vocational rehabilitation services; those that do not meet CSPD conditions at the time of hire are mandated to enroll in rehabilitation counseling programs (full length or post-graduate certificates), offered via distance delivery through West Virginia University, San Diego State University, and University of Kentucky.

* In FFY 2013, 4 VR counselors participated in academic training; one VR counselor completed a graduate program; and one VR counselor successfully passed the CRC exam. DVR currently employs 40 VR Counselors, 90 percent fully meet the CSPD requirements. This represents a 3 percent increase from FFY2012.

* Four VR counselors participated in academic training. One VR counselor completed her graduate education during this time period and successfully passed the CRC exam.

* The Division employs 40 VR Counselors, 90 percent of whom fully meet CSPD requirements. This represents a 3 percent increase from FFY2012.

Strategies contributing to success:

* Participate in local job/career fairs

* Form an in-house training and staff development team

* Offer paid and non-paid graduate internships

* Support rehabilitation counseling as an employment goal for DVR participants

* Support staff in fulfilling academic requirements to qualify for CRC

* Seek out training to help staff achieve CRC recertification and professional growth

* Utilize training resources and support of TACE and CCER

* Arrange presentations to graduate level counseling students at the local university

* Develop a career advancement system that integrates educational and credentialing required for initial hire and future promotion DVR successfully modified rehabilitation counselor position descriptions to comply with CSPD provisions/mandates.

Factors impeding achievement:

* Educational institutions within the state of Alaska currently lack Bachelor and Master level programs in Rehabilitation Counseling. University of Alaska offers academic programs in related disciplines, such as Associate and Bachelor degrees in Human Services and Psychology, as well as Master of Education degree in Counseling

Priority 2. Provide on-going training opportunities

Outcome:

* DVR employs 40 VR Counselors, 90 percent of whom fully meet CSPD requirements. This represents a 3 percent increase from FFY2012.

* DVR has a well trained staff providing high quality VR services as evidenced by DVR meeting all the standards and indicators

Strategies contributing to success:

- * Training and development is guided by issues identified during needs assessment, and takes into account budget availability, new federal initiatives, and outcome of program evaluation. Needs assessment involves individual/regional case reviews, client satisfaction surveys, consumer forums, performance appraisals, performance skill rating tools, employee development plans, Client Assistant Program annual reports, and supervisor/employee training needs surveys.

- * During FY2013, FY2013, DVR staff participated in several conferences, including: National symposium for individuals who are deaf/hard of hearing, Annual school on addictions & behavioral health, National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute, Statewide Special Education Conference, Annual in-service training focused on serving offenders, Elders in Training, Serving offenders with cognitive impairments, and Full lives in rural Alaska.

- * Other major training activities consisted of: Ethics for rehabilitation professionals, Emerging Leaders Training, First lessons in supervision, Non-violent crisis intervention, Assessment tools, and Disability Summit.

- * Throughout the year, DVR staff participated in eighteen different continuing education, web-based brief workshops, including: Medical Aspects of Disability, Traumatic Brain Injury, Apples versus Androids, Aging and Disability, and Medicaid Waiver.

- * All new VR assistant staff participates in on-line training within their first year of employment, learning about: History of VR, Basic Ethical Considerations, Navigating Sticky Situations, Developing Collaborative Relationships, and Cultural Diversity.

- * All new VR assistant staff participates in on-line training within their first year of employment, learning about: History of VR Basic Ethical Considerations Navigating Sticky Situations Developing Collaborative Relationships Cultural Diversity

- * Training activities occur on a continuous basis and many are delivered via teleconference format through CCER.

- * VR counselors utilize the services of medical/psychiatric consultants to regularly update their disability-related knowledge. Evidence-based best practices and advances in the field, presented by the Institute on Rehabilitation Issues (IRI).

Factors impeding achievement:

- * Lack of local training

Priority 3.Support leadership development and succession planning

Outcome:

- * DVR worked with the TACE on succession planning

- * DVR sent staff to Emerging Leaders and the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute

Strategies contributing to success:

- * Availability of funds

Factors impeding achievement:

- * Staff turnover

Goal 3 – DVR will distinguish its role in the workforce system and will leverage partnerships to maximize resources and support for employment of individuals with disabilities

Priority 1. Partner with employers to promote the hiring of people with disabilities

Outcome:

- * Provisional hire information is part of the training curriculum for State of Alaska Hiring Managers DVR worked with the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE) to support the State as a Model Employer. In FY2013, the State of Alaska was the single largest employer of DVR’s clients.

- * The DVR Business Team which is comprised of four field staff and the Assistant Chief of Rehabilitation Services continues to meet and respond to workforce development needs of Alaskans with disabilities by working directly with businesses in a progressive model. The Business Team also coordinates with CSAVR’s National NET system in identifying and working directly with businesses who identify an interest in targeting the hiring of people with disabilities.

Strategies contributing to success:

- * Supported the Governor’s Council on Disabilities and Special Education (GCDSE) survey of State of Alaska employees on the occurrence and type of disabilities

- * Local staff works in the community with local employers in both the private and public sectors to provide information about VR services including unions, Chamber of Commerce and the University system

- * Assign staff to participate in Walgreen’s national REDI project

- * Business Team created to network with employers

- * Staff attended job local fairs including those held for returning veterans Development of a Job Placement Specialist in our largest office

- * As part of the State as a Model Employer initiative, worked with the (GCDSE) to ensure provisional hire information was included in the training curriculum for State of Alaska Hiring Managers.

- * Support Project Search sites across the state

- * DVR staff serve on boards including the GCDSE, the state Mental Health Board and the Community and Public Transportation Advisory board.

Factors impeding achievement:

- * DVR is a small agency and does not always have the capacity to participate in all requested initiatives

Priority 2.Partner with other service providers to maximize resources and coordinate services especially for individuals who are in need of long term supported employment services and employment services from community behavioral health providers

Outcome:

- * DVR is an active participant in new and on-going initiatives providing opportunities for individuals who often require long-term supports.

Strategies contributing to success:

- * Participate in BrainWorks in Anchorage and Fairbanks

- * DVR staff involved with community organizations such those developing a technology lab for children, the Fairbanks Native Association's Women and Children Healing Center and local TBI support groups.

- * On-going discussions with Behavioral Health providers on requirements and success rates for placement

- * Outreach to the Division of Public Assistance (DPA) contractors for service coordination to joint participants

- * DVR staff participates in: the Deaf Education Board, DPA's Family First program, the Citizen Re-entry Program, the Mental Health Court, the Youth Job Center, the Office of Children Services, Homeless Connect summit, the Veterans Stand Down summit, the Wellness Court and the Juvenile Mental Health Court

- * DVR staff is working with the Division of Disability and Senior Services to utilize the opportunities for work experiences and provisional hire

Factors impeding achievement:

* DVR staff capacity

* Priorities vary among agencies.

2. Identify all supported employment program goals consistent with the goals described in Attachment 4.11(c)(4), including an evaluation of the extent to which the supported employment program goals were achieved.

- Identify the strategies that contributed to the achievement of the goals.
- Provide a description of the factors that impeded the achievement of the goals and priorities.

Goals and Priorities for the FFY2013 supported employment (SE) program:

1. DVR will provide SE services to 170 eligible individuals.
2. DVR will assist 50 SE eligible individuals to obtain competitive employment.
3. DVR will be able to provide all the identified required VR services to all SE eligible individuals.
4. Explore opportunities for CRPs and other entities to become employment networks to provide long-term supports.
5. Work with the community mental health system to increase and instate work related programs within that system.
6. Emphasize community based, integrated employment settings with the Governor's Council on Disability and Special Education, the Alaska Mental Health Board, community behavioral health programs and the Trust to increase vocational programs within the mental health service delivery system.

FFY2013 SE Program Outcomes:

1. DVR provided VR services under an IPE to 211 SE eligible individuals.
2. DVR successfully assisted 53 SE eligible individuals in obtaining competitive employment.
3. DVR was not on an order of selection and had adequate funding and staff to provide SE services to all eligible individuals.

Strategies contributing to the achievement of the goals:

1. Adequate SE funding was available to DVR counselors.
2. DVR has continued to support and work with the Employment Security Division in the endeavor of One-Stop Job Centers to become Employment Networks.
3. DVR has continued to support Project Search.
4. The Alaska Division of Senior and Disability Services has continued to work to reduce the wait list for support services.
5. DVR has continued to work with the community mental health system to increase and/or to reinstate work related programs within that system of providers.

Factors Impeding the Achievement of Goals:

DVR met its goals for FFY2013, but continues to work to maintain a level of success and improvement of services.

3. Provide an Assessment of the performance of the VR program on the standards and indicators for FY 2013.

DVR achieved successful performance on Evaluation Standard 1 (employment outcomes) and Evaluation Standard 2 (equal access) as defined in 34 CFR Part 361.82. DVR increased its performance in FFY2013 over FFY2012 in five of the seven indicators: 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 and 2.1. Both indicators 1.3 and 1.4 exceeded the standard in excess of twenty-five percentage points.

4. Provide a report on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion (I&E) activities were utilized in FY 2013.

In FFY2013, Alaska DVR utilized innovation and expansion funds to support the State Independent Living Council (SILC) and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Council (SVRC) which functions in Alaska as the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC).

The SVRC is a full and active partner in the development of DVR's policies, regulations and procedures. The SVRC holds takes public comment on the VR program at their quarterly meetings. These meetings are typically held once a year in each of the three largest populations centers of the state (Juneau, Anchorage and Fairbanks) and one rural location. Statewide notification of the meetings is made through the State of Alaska's public meeting and

announcement system as well as being advertised in local VR offices. Individuals outside the meeting area are encouraged to comment either by calling in, faxing or mailing comments. DVR uses these comments as part of the division's ongoing program evaluation which is integral to the strategic planning process and the comprehensive statewide needs assessment.

DVR also supports the SILC. The director of DVR is a member of the SILC and a DVR representative participates in the development of the State Plan for Independent Living (SPIL).

Innovation and Expansion Activities for 2013

- Support of the SRC: \$50,958
- Support of the SILC: \$167,408

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Attachment 6.3 Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

- Describe quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities
- Describe the timing of the transition to extended services

Supported employment (SE) remains a priority for DVR. DVR's SE program provides opportunities for Alaskans with the most significant disabilities to achieve competitive employment in integrated settings with ongoing support provided by a variety of partners. These are individuals with developmental disabilities, severe mental illness and traumatic brain injuries for whom competitive employment has not traditionally occurred.

DVR provides a continuum of SE services and, in partnership with other human services agencies and programs, the continuing support that persons with the most significant disabilities need to develop, maintain and advance in competitive employment. DVR continues to work closely with other agencies and community-based organizations and groups to develop, refine and expand the availability of SE services throughout Alaska. Current initiatives include:

1. BrainWorks is an innovative project to assist individuals with brain injury in starting a business and is part of a two-year research project funded by the Kessler Foundation and is managed by the University of Alaska, Center for Human Development. Participants in BrainWorks will go through a customized self-employment process and will receive assistance with identifying supporters, identifying a business concept, writing a business plan, preparing to launch a business, and maintaining a business. Pilot projects are expected in Anchorage, Juneau, and Fairbanks.

2. FASD Steering Committee. This is an interagency group including the Alaska Court System, Alaska Department of Corrections, Division of Juvenile Justice, Division of Public Assistance, Division of Behavioral Health, AIVRS programs, and DVR. The goal of the group is to increase the State's capacity to help individuals with FASD to become more successfully independent.

3. Tapestry Postsecondary Transition Program through the University of Alaska, Center for Human Development. The purpose of this program is to provide students (ages 18 to 21) with intellectual and cognitive disabilities a postsecondary college experience to develop self-advocacy skills, engage in career exploration, and develop social skills that lead to employment in a career field or enrollment in a postsecondary educational program.

Quality of Supported Employment Services

In general, the quality of a DVR SE plan is evaluated to ensure it complies with defining the criteria of SE:

- Work is performed in an integrated setting that provides interactions with individuals who do not have disabilities, other than caregivers.

- The individual is receiving a wage commensurate with non-disabled workers doing the same work.
- The ongoing support needs and source have been identified.
- SE services provided to individuals are for the maximum number of hours possible, based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice of the individual.
- The individual and the employer are satisfied with the placement.

The quality of SE services is also assured through the establishment of formal service provider agreements between DVR and those providing the rehabilitation services and through regular program evaluation and review.

Scope of Supported Employment Services

DVR provides the full scope of SE services under an IPE to individuals with significant disabilities including person with psychiatric disabilities, behavioral health disabilities, developmental disabilities or traumatic brain injuries. DVR continues to work with the Governor's Council on Special Education and Disabilities to stimulate and perpetuate SE services through components of the Medicaid Infrastructure Grant and with the Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Senior and Disability Services to enhance and streamline the delivery of SE services across state agencies.

Extent of SE Services

Supported employment is integrated into the array of services and programs available to Alaskans with disabilities, including Alaska's behavioral health and developmental disability services systems. Success in SE requires a partnership among the responsible state and community programs, consumers and families and employers. Long-term success continues to depend on the availability of funding. DVR is continuing to work with the Job Centers that have become employment networks to implement the Partnership Plus model for Ticket to Work Program recipients.

DVR has adequate resource to provide SE services to all eligible individuals who, because of the significance of their disability, require intensive services to gain employment and extended services to maintain employment. DVR provides intensive SE services under a place and train model until employment stability is achieved for a period not to exceed 18 months. The individual then transitions into the long term extended services needed for job maintenance. Extended services are provided by an agency other than DVR or through natural supports. A VR counselor must have a reasonable expectation that extended services are or will become available

to the individual prior to developing an individualized plan for employment (IPE) to provide SE services.

Transition to Extended Services

DVR provides intensive training services to SE consumers for a maximum of 18 months. Special circumstances may occur where the VR counselor and the individual agree to extend the training in order to achieve the vocational goal on the IPE. Supported employment providers who do not receive extended support funding from the Division of Senior and Disability Services, use natural supports and non-traditional resources to provide extended support services.

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System Information

System information

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